



South students make history by entering robotics regional contest

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TERRE HAUTE— For the first time in school history, students from Terre Haute South Vigo High School entered a First Robotics Competition. Eight students and three mentors took the short trip to West Lafayette, to compete in the 4th Annual First Robotics, Boilermaker Regional on March 13-15. South Robotics Team No. 2368 was one of 40 teams competing for a bid to the National competition in Atlanta.

The team was nervous about entering the arena for the first day of the three-day competition. Their objective for that day would be testing and scouting what the other robots were capable of doing. Every year, First Robotics has a unique new game in which teams form alliances with two other robots. This year's game entailed dropping two 40-inch balls from a ladder rack that was over six feet high. Once the ball was in play, teams could score points by hurdling a ball over the rack or passing it under the rack. Terre Haute South's robot was designed to knock the ball off and score laps. The kids named the robot "Nuts and Bolts" due to the amount of hardware that was required for its construction. At the end of day one, South's robot was very dependable, moved well around the track, and was a good alliance member in every round. As a whole, South students on the team met many new and exciting individuals. One team in particular, "The Wildstangs," stopped by and worked with the students in order to make the robot work in Autonomous mode (able to move on its own).

Day two provided the students with a lot of excitement, it was qualifying day. Students competed in six matches. In the morning session, South Robotics won all three matches putting them as the sixth seed team. The Autonomous programming for the night before worked flawlessly. South Robotics was an all-around team that could get the job done. The afternoon sessions would put the robot to the test. Several of the teams that would be on the opposite alliance were also in the top 10.

The matches proved to be brutal, with South winning one of the three. At the end of six matches, South Robotics was 4-2 with an 18th-seed ranking. At the end of the day, South would make several minor repairs to the robot for the final three qualifying matches in the morning and hopefully a spot in the finals.

The third day, also finals day, was the most rewarding experience of the weekend. South Robotics had a tough day ahead of them and needed to win as many of the three remaining qualifying matches as possible. By the end of qualifying, South Robotics had won two matches and earned an 11th seed position.

The top eight teams receive an automatic bid to the tournament. During the alliance selection, two of the top eight teams decided to join an alliance together moving South up to captain of the eighth Seed blue alliance. South selected two capable robots to join their alliance; Team No. 931 and Team No. 2040.

It was finally tournament time, and South Robotics had the pleasure of representing the school and being the only rookie team to make the Boilermaker Regional tournament.

The first match for South was against the No. 1 seed alliance. To advance in the tournament they would need to win two out of three matches. The blue alliance fought hard but came up short in the first two matches ending their hopes for a national bid. Still, South Robotics did have a lot to be proud of and the awards ceremony was proof.

South earned the right to walk across the stage as a team and be presented team trophies and metals for being the highest seeded rookie team.

Although this would bring a close to South Robotics' rookie year, the team has many things to be proud of. As a part of that team, we would like to thank our sponsors for helping us achieve so much in our rookie year. They include the Vigo County School Corp. Career and Technical Education Department, Indiana Department of Workforce Development, Saturn, Garmong, IBEW Plus 5, and parent donations.

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